



INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION
UNITED STATES AND MEXICO
UNITED STATES SECTION

For immediate release
May 12, 2006

**YUMA WETLANDS, YUMA DESALTING PLANT,
AND LOWER COLORADO RIVER PROJECT
ON AGENDA FOR MAY 16 PUBLIC MEETING**

The United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) announces a public meeting of the Colorado River Citizens' Forum (CRCF) on May 16, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. MST, City of Yuma Public Works Department Training Room, 155 West 14th Street, Yuma, Arizona.

Kevin Eatherly, Capital Improvement Program Project Manager, will discuss the Yuma East Wetlands Restoration Project. The East Wetlands Restoration Project started in 2000 with a master planning process involving over 40 stakeholders and multiple agencies. The master plan represents community consensus on the riparian restoration of 1400 acres along the lower Colorado River. The first clearing occurred in the winter of 2003 after a lengthy environmental and permitting process. Since 2003, the project has garnered over \$5.8 million in funding, cleared over 200 acres, and restored a backwater channel. The project has incorporated several bioengineering techniques and established experimentation projects to identify methods of collecting and propagating native seeds. A native seed collection program is now in place to create a local genetic stock of plant material to replace exotic species. Most importantly, the project has re-established the community's link to the Colorado River and its historic importance.

USIBWC Yuma Project Manager Al Goff will give an update on the Lower Colorado River Boundary and Capacity Preservation Project – an effort to maintain the Colorado River as the international boundary and to ensure the channel's capacity to safely convey flood flows and deliver water to Mexico. The USIBWC, in

conjunction with the United States Bureau of Reclamation, is initiating a study that will help to determine the recommended capacity for the river channel based on the likelihood of floods of various magnitudes.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation will provide an update on the status of the Yuma Desalting Plant. Located five miles west of Yuma, it is the world's largest reverse osmosis desalting plant. When operational, it can produce up to 72.4 million gallons per day of desalted water. Completed in 1992, it was intended to desalt agricultural drainage waters in order to comply with an agreement of the International Boundary and Water Commission that regulates the salinity of Colorado River water that the United States delivers to Mexico. The plant is not operating currently as the United States has been meeting its salinity obligations to Mexico by other means; however, there has been renewed interest in recent years in resuming plant operations.

The meeting will also include a brief status report on the schedule for the All American Canal lining project.

The CRCF was established in 2003 to facilitate the exchange of information between the USIBWC and members of the public about Commission activities in Yuma County, Arizona and Imperial County, California. The CRCF is intended to bring together community members, enabling the early and continued two-way flow of information, concerns, values, and needs between the USIBWC and the general public, environmentalists, government agencies, irrigation districts, municipalities, and other interested parties. The CRCF has nine volunteer board members who represent a variety of interests in the region.

A complete meeting agenda is attached. Members of the public who would like more information about the meeting can contact the USIBWC's Yuma Office at (928) 782-1598.

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COLORADO RIVER CITIZENS' FORUM

Tuesday, May 16, 2006

4:00 - 6:00 P.M. (MST)

**City of Yuma Public Works Department Training Room
155 West 14th Street (at the corner of 1st Ave.)
Yuma, Arizona**

Agenda

- Welcome and Introduction - Brian McNeece, Citizens' Forum Co-Chair
- Yuma Desalting Plant - U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- Status Report on the All American Canal Lining Project – Paul Peschel, Assistant Water Manager/Engineering Services, Imperial Irrigation District
- Yuma East Wetlands Restoration Project - Kevin Eatherly, CIP Project Manager
- Update on the Lower Colorado River Boundary and Capacity Project - Al Goff, USIBWC Yuma Project Manager
- Public Comment
- Board Discussion/Suggested Future Agenda Items

If you have a disability that you wish to self-identify confidentially that requires accommodation, please advise us ahead of time.

For more information, call 928-782-1598 or e-mail sallyspener@ibwc.state.gov.